

Upon the recommendation of City Council President William H. Dwight, Councilors Alisa F. Klein and Maureen T. Carney and the Mayor's Youth Commission

**Resolution Calling for the Welcoming of Refugees in the City of Northampton**

**WHEREAS**, The City of Northampton is largely comprised of residents, and the descendants of families, who came to the United States from countries all over the world; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Northampton has been built, in large part, on the strength of its immigrant communities; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Northampton embraces ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity; and

**WHEREAS**, The people of Northampton have a long history of opening their arms and homes to the vulnerable and disadvantaged and a commitment to fostering an open and welcoming democracy in which humanitarian efforts are embraced; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Northampton has in previous resolutions such as the 2011 Resolution of the Northampton City Council on the Secure Communities Program and the Preservation of Our Civil Rights affirmed its belief that a diverse population contributes to the vitality of our community, and asserted its commitment to the protection of the human and civil rights of all who reside in and visit the City; and

**WHEREAS**, The conflict in Syria has caused a refugee crisis, which the City of Northampton will not ignore; and

**WHEREAS**, More than seven million Syrians have been displaced by war and the number of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria constitutes the world's single largest refugee crisis in almost a quarter of a century; and

**WHEREAS**, Many of those referred to the United States for resettlement are the most vulnerable of Syrian refugees such as survivors of torture, people with special medical needs, women who head households, and children; and

**WHEREAS**, President Obama has committed to accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees within the next year; and

**WHEREAS**, Those wishing to come to the United States must apply through the United Nations and are subject to the highest level of security checks of any category of traveler to our country by the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, and the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security; and

**WHEREAS**, Since 9/11, more than 750,000 refugees have been resettled in the United States and not one has been convicted of plotting a terrorist attack in the U.S.; and

**WHEREAS**, Despite the fact that they have no legal standing to dictate refugee and immigration policy to the federal government or determine who will live in their states, more than half the governors of the 50 U.S. states, including the Governor of the Commonwealth, Charles Baker, Jr., have declared their opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement in their cities; and

**WHEREAS**, The Supreme Court of the United States explained in *Hines v. Davidowitz*, "the supremacy of the national power in the general field of foreign affairs, including power over immigration, naturalization and deportation, is made clear by the Constitution"; and

**WHEREAS**, The Refugee Act of 1980 declared it "the historic policy of the United States to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands" and gave the President the power to handle an "unforeseen emergency refugee situation" such as one involving "grave humanitarian concerns"; and

**WHEREAS**, Article 14(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United States of America in 1948, states "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution"; and

**WHEREAS**, The United States of America ratified both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, we have a binding obligation under binding international law to "protect refugees and to receive victims of political persecution"; and

**WHEREAS**, The Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the United States of America is party, applies to all children without discrimination, including child refugees and asylum-seekers. The Convention specifically stipulates that "every child seeking refugee status has a right to protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of the rights set forth in that Convention and in others to which the State is a party"; and

**WHEREAS**, Syrian refugees should to be treated with the dignity, care, and compassion that every person deserves, and require housing and support services such as counseling, education, health care, food, security, case management, and legal assistance; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That the City Council of Northampton, Massachusetts

1. Affirms that Northampton is committed to serving as a place of sanctuary and refuge for refugees from around the world; and
2. Urges city departments, local businesses, and charitable organizations to provide shelter, sustenance, and other services for refugee families relocating to and integrating into our community; and
3. Urges residents to consider demonstrating their support, willingness, and availability of space to take in refugees by signing the petition at <http://afscwm.org/blog/2015/11/24/we-welcome-refugees/>, and in other ways they deem useful; and
4. Requests of the Governor to reconsider his stated opposition to Syrian refugee resettlement in Massachusetts and thereby reaffirm the values of our community and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In City Council, December 3, 2015  
Passed First Reading, on Roll Call Vote of 8Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Councilor Murphy)

Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council

In City Council, December 17, 2015  
Passed Second Reading, on Roll Call Vote of 8Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Councilor Murphy)

Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council

Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled  
I hereby certify that the above Resolution passed the Northampton City Council on December 17, 2015

David J. Narkewicz, Mayor approved the Resolution on December 18, 2015

Attest: Pamela L. Powers, Clerk of Council